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delicately modelled before it hardened. It was then gilded with gold-leaf and its background was solidly painted in blue, relieved by accents of violet, green and red in the cartouches, wreaths and masks. Finally the entire wall surface was glazed with transparent color and scumbled with semi-opaque pigment in order to suggest a little

of the *patina* of the Renaissance chapel walls. The four figures enthroned upon the walls represent Architecture, Sculpture and Painting, and Printing, "the art preservative of the arts." The broad cove of the dome bears a conventionalized vine-covered trellis, pierced by four octagonal openings which give glimpses of sky.

THE SERBIAN NATIONAL SCULPTOR

BEING SOME ACCOUNT OF IVAN MESTROVIC AND HIS ART

BY W. G. BLAIKIE-MURDOCK

IT was not until quite lately that people throughout America and Europe began to take much interest in Serbia. Hidden away behind frontiers of wild and towering mountains, her denizens speaking a language singularly difficult for all others to learn, the little country attracted only very occasional travelers; and hence she continued, generation after generation, to preserve many of her ancient customs with that tenacity and fondness for which Wales is famous in this relation. In the year 1912, however, when war broke out between the Turks and the Serbians, the gaze of the world was at length directed towards the latter race; and when it transpired, a little later, that Serbia was destined to play an eminently romantic part in a much greater military drama, interest in the land quickly commenced growing wider and deeper. Then, when she underwent terrible sufferings owing to her gallantry, this feeling of interest in her doings ripened into heartfelt sympathy; and, largely as a result of the development of these sentiments, an unprecedented affair is occurring in London. For, at the South Kensington Museum

there—which hitherto, apart from its print-room, has confined its exhibits almost exclusively to the productions of deceased masters—two spacious halls have been constituted a temporary domicile for sculpture by a Serbian of today, Ivan Mestrovic, the collection embodying upwards of seventy pieces, several of them of huge dimensions. English people have flocked to see the show, many of them being attracted thither, no doubt, simply by the glamour attaching at present to whatsoever things are Serbian. But Mestrovic requires no extraneous recommendation of that sort, a literally overwhelming greatness pertaining to much of his work; and indeed this unexpected displaying thereof—if not the most important event which has taken place, in the whole art world of London, since the Whistler Memorial Exhibition—is unquestionably the most momentous of such events so far as sculpture is concerned. "C'était mon rêve!" said Auguste Rodin enthusiastically, on seeing the Serbian artist's creations.*

Ivan Mestrovic was born in 1883 at the village of Otavice, in the Dalmatian Highlands, a district which geographers

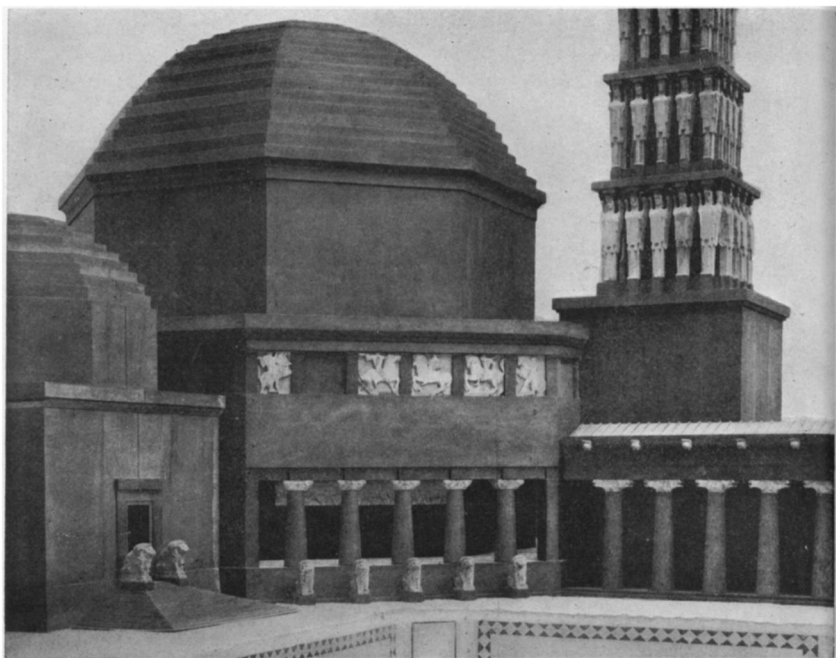
*When Mestrovic's sculpture was first exhibited in London there was great divergence of opinion concerning not merely its merit but character. Some contended that the works were not only inartistic but morally offensive. Among these was Prof. Selwyn Image, who addressed an open letter of protest to the Editor of the *London Times*. To this letter John Lavery, Charles Ricketts and John S. Sargent jointly made reply as follows:

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.
Sir: Prof. Selwyn Image in his letter of June 30 allows skill and genius to M. Ivan Mestrovic. He considers, however, that not a little of his work is wilful, inchoate, amorphous, in one case morally offensive, and fears that this exhibition will make for the encouragement of certain morbid and pernicious tendencies of our day.

Over and above the skill and genius even admitted by Prof. Selwyn Image there remains in the work of Ivan Mestrovic the tragic intensity, the austerity and passion which the artist has imparted to his statues and groups. These high qualities place them apart from all merely morbid and pernicious tendencies, and, in the tragic world to which these works belong, there is no room for what is trivial and morally offensive.

Yours obediently,

JOHN LAVERY,
C. RICKETTS,
JOHN S. SARGENT.



MODEL FOR TEMPLE COMMEMORATING KOSOVO

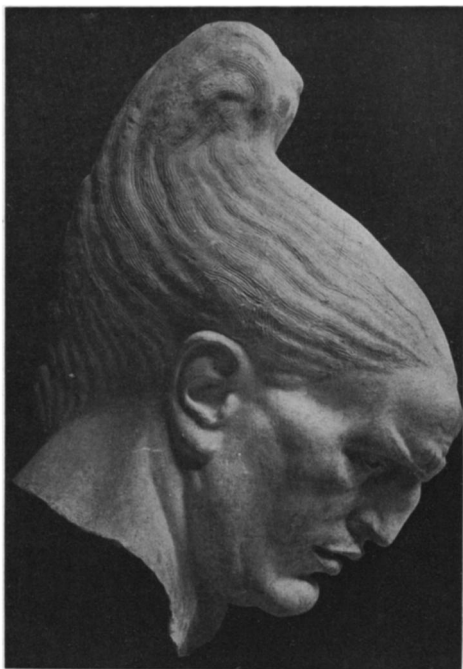
IVAN MESTROVIC

regard as part of Austria, but whose natives, far from being Teutonic, are what ethnologists style Serbo-Croats, being as closely related to the actual Serbians as the Scots are to the English. Coming of a peasant family, Ivan spent his early boyhood in tending his father's flocks; yet very soon he essayed sculpture in wood or stone, and some of these first efforts of his may still be seen at the museum of Knin. Accordingly, at the age of eighteen, he was apprenticed to a marble-worker; while in 1900, getting some financial aid from the local government of his homeland, he was enabled to proceed to Vienna, and become a pupil at its art-school. Two years afterwards he exhibited some work at the Viennese Secession, while in 1907, having meanwhile gone to Paris, he displayed several items at the Salon d'Automne, an institution nowadays the chief rallying-ground of those younger French artists who are truly aspirational; and, having been warmly

acclaimed by a number of these, he presently held a collective show of his productions at Vienna. That was in 1910, but it was not until the following year, when a representative assemblage of the sculptor's works figured in the Serbian Pavilion, at the vast International Exposition at Rome, that the full splendor of his gifts began to evoke its one homage; and surely none, who studied his output there for the first time, will ever be able to forget the impressions received. Since then two good tributes to him have appeared, the one in the Italian paper, *L'Eroica*, the other in the more familiar German periodical, *Die Kunst für Alle*. And these articles probably had much to do with stirring up enthusiasm about Mestrovic among a group of young English artists, who realizing that the present state of European politics gave them an unique opportunity of doing something for their new idol, marshalled a committee including the Serbian Ambassador, together with

numerous prominent English politicians, with whose aid they contrived to find the money requisite to bring some of the sculptor's works overseas. Nor is the ardor of these moving spirits bated yet, it being their hope and intention that, at no very distant date, the Serbian master will be represented for a while in America.

freedom from foreign suzerainty. George Borrow in *Wild Wales* and Matthew Arnold in *The Study of Celtic Literature*, have pointed out how intimate are the Welsh peasantry, even, with the rich legendary lore of their land, how familiar they are still with the deeds of the various bygone champions of the Cymry. And it is pre-



HERO'S HEAD

IVAN MESTROVIC

As already noted, Mestrovic in no way requires the extraneous recommendation of belonging to a race in which the world chances to be specially interested at present; yet the knowledge that he is Serbian forms something of an aid, as will be seen presently, to a just understanding of his art. Serbia was compared above to Wales, and that comparison may well be emphasized now; for not only are these two countries at one in having shown an outstanding fidelity to their ancient usages, but both cherish with pride a history consisting in a long and strenuous fight for

cisely thus also with the Serbians, the very peasants among them loving to talk of the great martial actions of their forefathers in the middle-ages, and speaking of these actions as though they had occurred but yesterday. Indeed, the present national head-dress of the race, a red cap with a black band, is a survival from very remote times, having been first worn as a symbol of mourning for the battle of Kosovo in 1389, when the mediaeval Serb empire succumbed to Turkish onslaughts, the last Serbian Tsar dying with his face to the foe. And as to that Marko Kraljevic who,



THE ANNUNCIATION

IVAN MESTROVIC

after this fray, contrived to rally his countrymen against their oppressors; even in the present war Serbian soldiers have declared that he had appeared to them, mounted on his famous grey charger, the apparition charging them to "remember hardihood in the day of battle," as an old Celtic poet sings. Marko, in short, is the Owen Glendower of Serbia, countless ballads and tales keeping his sacred memory

fresh; and nowhere is this traditional literature better known, and better loved, than in that Dalmatian district which gave birth to Mestrovic, patriotism having naturally been kept particularly warm, among the Serbo-Croats, by the mere fact that the rule over them is alien. They feel, and feel strongly, that all the Southern Slavs should be banded together; they maintain that a Serbian Empire should once more

be an actuality. And this eager desire for racial unity, this passionate cherishing of an heroic past, are what have ever formed the main inspiration of the young Serbian sculptor's art. His earliest essays in sculpture might be described as illustrations to those patriotic songs which he had heard sung on the hills round his home, and, since then, he has continued to draw his subject-matter chiefly from his country's story, among his latest works being a model for a temple commemorating Kosovo, which he, and many of his compatriots, would fain see erected on the very site of the battle.

Lafcadio Hearn once observed that, would England maintain in the future, her lofty tradition in art she must needs imbibe a strain of Slavonic blood. And, in saying this, he does not appear to have meant that the Slavs are certain to be the supreme artistic race of the future, but that English people, having lived in comfortable conditions throughout many generations, have slowly grown somewhat inclined to be unemotional, whereas the Slavs, less fortunate, are still capable of tense feelings, of primitive and almost savage passions. Whether this suggested infusion would really benefit the Anglo-Saxon school is a difficult question, one which need not be debated here; and Hearn's words are cited, rather, because Mestrovic's art reflects in abundance the elements aforesaid, while in other respects too, it is essentially Slavonic. Living in wild and frequently desolate country, the Slavs have made an art among whose predominant notes is necessarily pathos, as witness the novels of Turgénieff, the music of Tchaikowsky. And though Mestrovic, in forming his technique, has probably learned much from the masterpieces of ancient Greece and Egypt, the actual temper of his work, instead of having anything in common with theirs, is kin to that in the characteristic things by his racial fellows. The caryatids in Greek and Egyptian buildings are usually of a curiously calm nature—impassive figures, having the semblance of neither asking for, nor offering, any sort of sympathy—but those of Mestrovic's creation are intensely human, the mien of each charged with a deep and appealing air of sadness. In his inde-

pendent statues, moreover, now he will show a woman mourning for her husband who has been killed by the Turks, now a man lamenting his wife slaughtered during his absence at the wars; and, nearly invariably, there is a poignancy as terrible as ever artist compassed. In one way, however, the sadness expressed by the Serbian sculptor is dissimilar from that which lives in the pages of Turgénieff, and throbs through much of Tchaikowsky's music. For while the Russian peasant, as depicted by the novelist and suggested by the composer, commonly presents the guise of being resigned to suffering as his inevitable lot, Mestrovic's figures have the air of seething with fury and the desire for retribution. "Forward, Serbia! and avenge the past!" they appear to shout savagely; while search as one will throughout these dynamic productions, scarcely anywhere can one detect a passage which seems to have given the artist difficulty, everywhere the stone or plaster has the look of having obeyed his will implicitly, and, in no instance, is the impression received that the inspiring emotion has suffered any cooling during its crystallization in a work of art.

Mestrovic's art reveals but little of that grace naturally looked for in fine sculpture; it discloses but few separate lines to linger over fondly, on account of their rhythm, as one lingers over many in the statuary of Praxiteles and his school, men who attained so signally the "unheard melodies" which Keats declares surpass those which are heard. Only, if herein lies a grave limitation on the part of the Serbian, may he not well be ranked far beyond many men possessing these orthodox merits? For artists, it should always be remembered, are great in proportion as they express real depths of feeling, notably such feelings as are of a subtle and mysterious order; they are great in proportion as they see into life. And Mestrovic, figuring the famous legends of his country, has done far more than that, expressing the passionate soul of that country, giving form to its paramount aspirations; while there clings to nearly all his pieces, that savour of the mysterious and ineffable which ever, and necessarily, pertains to strong emotions themselves. His creations are perhaps less beautiful, in the commonly accepted sense

of the term, than those of numerous recent and contemporary sculptors; but, fully as virile as any of these—not even excepting Rodin—he is more spiritual than they, he reflects a profounder inwardness. And it is this element in him—rather, possibly,

than anything else—which makes him worthy to be hailed as a towering artist, one of the very few modern workers in sculpture who may be mentioned, reasonably, along with the early masters thereof whom all revere.



MUSIC IN THE STUDIO

FRANCIS C. JONES